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ABSTRACT

This paper examines ways in which schools are a major agent in the continuing socialization that leads to discrimination against women and sex role stereotyping. The author gives illustrations from teacher behaviors, textbooks, physical education and athletics, and counseling. The paper then reviews some of the consequences of sex discrimination for women relating to jobs and economic opportunities. The final part of the paper deals with intervention strategies available and currently being explored for counteracting the sex stereotypes. The author notes, finally, the need to develop effective strategies for developing long-range, real-life changes in attitudes and behavior to alleviate some of the paralyzing effects of sex stereotypic practices and pressures. (NG)e.

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Intervention Strategies for Modifying Sex Stereotypes

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It has been asserted that the public schools of this nation as a rule, contribute along with certain home influences to preparing girls for second-class citizenship in our society. Early and pervasive differential treatment of the sexes in the home by parental socializing agents appears for the most part to be further reinforced by the curriculum, and by the policies and practices of our public schools.

In general, the tenor of all of these "shaping" actions and policies is in the direction of defining certain behavior as more appropriate for females than males and vice versa. Girls generally are directed toward more passive nonaggressive role definitions, behaviors, and occupations; whereas, the expectations for boys generally is for a more active, assertive stance and occupational outcome. Girls are generally encouraged to be well-behaved, "little ladies"; whereas, boys are expected to be "rougher tougher," to be active and assertive in sports and leadership roles.

Sex Role Stereotyping in Schools

The schools as we have noted share responsibility for this situation. As early as kindergarten, schools begin to teach role stereotypes. The girls are expected to play in the playhouse corner equipped with a mock-up of mother's kitchen, while the boys are steered to a jungle gym in the other corner or to building materials. This practice of teaching stereotypic "masculinity" to boys and stereotypic "femininity" to girls is repeated at all levels of our school system.

Schools then communicate these stereotypes to children in a number of ways: textbooks and curriculum materials, the behavior of teachers, physical and health education and athletic activities, counseling services, and the status of teachers and educators as role models for children. A few examples of the ways stereotypes are perpetuated are presented below. Although most of these examples deal with the stereotyping of girls, they represent processes which limit boys and racial and ethnic groups in similar ways.

Textbooks

An examination of early reading texts and workbooks illustrates the pervasive biasing influences of authoritative text material. Tallies of school texts (Child, Potter and Levine 1946; Jacklin et al. 1972; and Zimet,

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1970) have shown for example, that stories about boys outnumbered those about girls by about 5.2. Boys were ingenious, creative, perservering, strong, brave, and competitive four times as often as girls. They were multidimensional and ranged about the world in varieties of real and fantasized adventures. Girls however, were passive, docile, and dependent six times as often as boys. They were confined to the home or immediate neighborhood and had few adventures either real or make-believe.

Teacher Behavior

A study of teacher-pupil interactions in several fourth and sixth grade classes indicates that teachers interacted more with boys than with girls in each of the four major categories of teaching behavior-approval, instruction, listening, and disapproval, in short, that boys received more active teacher-attention than girls did. When the teachers' disapproval was analyzed, it demonstrated that disapproval for lack of knowledge or skill represented 80 percent of the total disapproval directed at girls, as opposed to only 26 percent of the total for boys. (Spaulding, 1963; Weal, 1973)

Physical Education and Athletics

In the Waco, Texas Independent school district, the boy's athletic program provides for interscholastic competition in seven sports, at an annual cost to the district of $250,000. There is no girl's athletic program; girls may enter interscholastic competition in only one sport, tennis, at an annual cost to the district of $970. The school district maintains $1,050,000 worth of athletic properties for the use of boys only; girls may use only tennis balls on a regular basis. (Weal, 1973)

Counseling

In the same Waco, Texas school district, it was discovered that by "dictum, counseling, and persuasion, or by lack of alternatives," girls are required to enroll in homemaking and hairdressing (black girls only), and boys in woodshop, auto mechanics, mechanical and electrical repair and construction trades. Students requesting admission to courses traditionally intended for members of the other sex were ridiculed and counseled about their inappropriate choices. These sex-segregated classes were found to be especially prevalent in schools with high percentages of racial minority students, prompting one observation that homemaking courses were used to train minority girls to be maids and waitresses. (Spaulding, 1963; Weal, 1973)

Sex Role Stereotyping in Jobs, Economic Opportunities

The outcome of all these combined sex-stereotyped socializing efforts of home and school can be seen in various statistical compilations of data:

Income Level

The status of women - America's numerical majority of 51 percent of the population remains today as relentlessly second class as that of any minority. A third of the American work force is female: 42 percent of the women sixteen and older work. Yet there is only one economic indicator in which women consistently lead men, and that is the number living in poverty. In 1968, the median salary for full-time year-round workers was $7,870 for white males, $5,314 for nonwhite men, $4,580 for white women and $3,487 for nonwhite women. The median wage for full-time women workers is 58.2 percent of that for men.

Occupational Level as Related to Educational Attainment

Education, the democratic equalizer, has not guaranteed women an even entry into the job market. Of women with five or more years of college, 6 percent take jobs as unskilled or semiskilled workers, and 17 percent of the women with four years of college enter the labor pool at these lowest levels. Thus, translated into educational levels, women make half of what men do; on the average, a woman needs a college degree to earn more than a man does with an eighth-grade education.

Professional Achievement

The number of women in the higher business and professional categories is grossly disproportionate both to the population and to the educational background of some women. Women constitute only 9 percent of all the professions, 7 percent of the doctors, 3 percent of the lawyers, 1 percent of the engineers. Average starting salaries in each of these fields are lower for women than for their male counterparts.

Women in the Professional Field of Education

Even when women enter more "traditional" professional fields, such as education they have trouble reaching the top. Nine out of ten elementary school teachers are women, but eight out of ten principals of these schools are men. Harvard University, for example had only two tenured women professors in its arts and sciences faculty in 1970; there were none in 1969. Yet

15 percent of the graduate degrees awarded at Harvard in recent years have gone to women. (Saapio, T.N., Jacklin, C.N., Title, C.K. 1973)

And in 1970-71, women represented 67 percent of all full-time public school teachers, 21 percent of the elementary school principals, 3 percent of the senior high school principals, 26 percent of the chief state school officers. The mean salary for female elementary and secondary teachers in 1971-72 was $9,216; the mean for men was $10, 013.

Intervention Strategies for Sex Stereotyping

In our schools, as in our society, we are beginning to examine the ways in which we limit the aspirations, growth, achievements, and contributions of children and adults when we view them and treat them not as individuals with unique characteristics and potentials but as members of a group defined by sex, race, or ethnic background. Not only does such stereotyping limit the optimal development of individuals and contributing members of society, but it is contrary to our democratic principles and in violation of federal legislation.

Given the overwhelming evidence of sex stereotyping practices and their handicapping aspects, a group of faculty members and graduate students at Boston University, for example, (Dorn, 1975; Gun, 1975; Kesselman, 1974; Michaelson, 1975; Nash, 1974, Shiraishi, 1975; and Speizer, 1975) have focused on strategies for intervening and modifying these usual emotionally crippling sex stereotypic influences. We are now at a crucial phase in our struggles against sex discrimination - that of remediation - and these pioneering attempts at correcting past disabling practices stand out as significant landmarks in that struggle.

Hence, presently (Figure 1) we are involved in developing and testing out the relative effectiveness of such strategems as:

. . .a Career Guidance Project with Role Modeling (Shiraishi, 1975)
. . .Workshops of Varying Duration and Content (Gun, 1975; Kesselman, 1974)
. . .Various Discussion Groups and Programs (Dorn, 1975; Speizer, 1975)
. . .Womens' Studies Courses (Michaelson, 1975; Speizer, 1975)

and with varying populations:

. . .Fifth and Sixth grade, suburban boys and girls (Nash, 1974; Kesselman, 1974)
. . .Adolescent, Puerto Rican, inner-city youths (Shiraishi, 1975)
. . .Junior college students (Michaelson, 1975; Speizer, 1975)
. . .Teachers-in-training (Dorn, 1975; Gun, 1975)
. . .Practicing fifth and sixth grade teachers (Kesselman, 1974)
. . .Counselors-in-training (Applegarth, 1975) and Counselors (Bowman and Nickerson, 1975) (Pettus and Nickerson, 1975)

In addition, numerous other supporting and corroborative studies have been or are in the process of being conducted. For example, Balazs (1974) has studied the development of U.S. female Olympic contenders; Balazs and

Nickerson (1974) are planning cross-cultural studies of high female achievers; and Mack (1975) is investing variables associated with female master's degree candidates' continuation in graduate school training.

It is apparent from our work to date that:

. . .readily replicable and valuable materials and procedures (curriculum, workshop units, etc.) are being developed, which will be of immeasurable aid to educators and other professional workers in this area;

. . .more is being systematically learned about the effectiveness of these procedures, and a better understanding of the nature and scope of the problem is being gained.

It is equally obvious to us, however, that much still needs to be done - for example:

. . .our populations to date have been primarily limited to junior college students and college education majors - probably highly "change oriented" groups - and to smaller samples of inner-city adolescent youth, fifth grade boys and girls and fifth grade teachers. Many more and a wider variety of populations need to be studied.

. . .furthermore, our studies to date, for the most part, have not been strict experimentally-controlled studies of the effectiveness of our procedures. Controls utilized thus far have, for example, consisted of equivalent groups who also volunteered for the experience (Dorn, 1975; Gun, 1975). Hence, one might assume that both our experimental and control groups in many instances have to some degree been self selected, and more highly motivated than women and men in general may prove to be.

. . .our duration of working with and measuring attitudinal change has been fairly limited to date, suggesting a future need to measure these postulated changes over a longer period of time, and with more behavioral indices to corroborate our largely paper-and-pencil attitudinal measures.

The future, hence, holds a multiplicity of exciting challenges and hard work for us. Our evolving strategems need to be tested out with a greater variety of populations and over longer periods of time. Furthermore, stricter and more elaborate controls need to be applied - and more behavioral, as well as attitudinal indices need to be obtained. For in the most practical sense, we need to develop strategies that are effective in developing long-range, real-life changes in attitude and behavior - if we are to be successful in alleviating some of the paralyzing effects of sex stereotypic practices and pressures.

We in closing invite your continuing interest and your inquiries into our work. We are most desirous of sharing our ideas, enthusiasm, energies and endeavors with you in the invigorating, liberating days which lies ahead all of us! Come join us in our chosen mission and in our life's work!

Figure I

SEX-STEREOTYPE INTERVENTION PROJECTS

POPULATIONS STUDIED *

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES	Elementary & High School-Age Children	College-Age Students	Teachers in Training	Teachers	Counselors and Counselors-in-training
Group Awareness	Sex-role awareness program, 6 weeks, 12 sessions (40 minutes each), 5th and 6th grade boys and girls. (Nash, 1974)		Sex-role awareness Group experience and weekly sessions Undergrad. SED majors (B.U. and State Colleges), (Dorn, 1975)		
Workshops	Sex-Role Awarness Workshop, 5th and 6th grade students and their teachers. (Kesselman, 1974)		Sex-Role Stereotype Workshop, 3 workshop sessions (1 & ½ hr. each) Undergraduate education majors (Gun, 1975)	Sex-Role Awareness Workshop, 4 sessions, 5th and 6th grade teachers & their students (Kesselman, 1974)	A 1½ hour professional workshop (Bowman & Nickerson, 1975) Four hour symposia presented at Inter-American Congress of Psychology (Pettus & Nickerson, 1975)
Courses		Womens' Studies Course (1 semester) Jr. College, Boston Area (Speizer, 1975)			
Programs	Career-Guidance Project, 2 weeks (a.m. sessions) Role-Modeling Trips, Discussions, Adolescent Puerto-Rican youth (Shiraishi, 1975)	Two (2) Womens' Studies Courses (1 Semester each) (Michaelson, 1975)			Short-Term (8 hr.) Didactic, Feminist Training Program (Applegarth, 1975)

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